3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

smaller urban and semi-urban communities, the country is essentially rural and dependent upon agriculture. There are, it is estimated, some 35,000 square miles of cultivable land, only twenty per cent of which is cropped in any one year. The country is watered by the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, and is amenable to great irrigational projects. Some large-scale and subsidiary irrigation schemes have been developed and others are under way. Until capital is available, however, to bring much more water to much more land, large areas of potentially arable and pasture land will continue in a state of unexploited fertility.

With the exception of a minority who dwell in the towns and smaller urban communities, the population is sparse and much of it mobile. Out of a total population of some 5,000,000 roughly twenty-two per cent live in urban areas, forty per cent in settled rural communities, thirty per cent in semi-settled rural areas, and eight per cent are nomadic.

The educational and other social problems and needs of the country can only be appreciated if it is realized that Iraq is predominantly rural in character and modes of life and, minor industries and developing oil projects apart, is dependent upon agriculture for its existence. There is a certain amount of industrial activity connected with drink, tobacco, soap, vegetable oils, foot-wear, bricks and a few cotton ginneries, but, generally speaking, the industrial capacity remains undeveloped. Oil output, however, is rapidly increasing, and the royalties from this industry have already made a valuable contribution to badly needed capital works.

Racially, the inhabitants may be roughly divided into seventy-seven per cent Arabs, seventeen per cent Kurds, three per cent Jews, the remainder being Turcomans, Yazidis and Assyrians. The number of Jews has, however, decreased by recent emigration into Palestine. The inhabitants may be further divided into distinctive religious groups, ninety-three per cent being Muslims, three per cent Jews, slightly less than three per cent Christians, the remainder being of miscellaneous faiths. Despite these marked religious differences, a feature of the public educational system of Iraq is its great religious toleration.

Generally speaking, although the inhabitants are distributed into distinctive racial and religious groups, they seem to share some important characteristics which, to the educator, are hopeful and significant. A visitor to the country cannot but be impressed with the great natural courtesy, friendliness and open-hearted hospitality invariably shown by people of all ranks and groups. In addition to these socially valuable characteristics, many of the people exhibit a quickness of response which, in those who have passed

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

through institutions of higher education, seems to develop into an extraordinary mental agility. Those who are politically articulate share a high concern for the future of Iraq as a nation.

A visitor to the country is also struck by a number of contradictions. Iraq has a brilliant cultural inheritance, yet the bulk of the population is illiterate. It is a country of great economic possibilities, yet the majority of the people exist at a meagre standard of life. The soil is of high fertility, yet it continues to be farmed by primitive methods. Above all, although the future prosperity of the country depends upon the application of science and power to the land, agricultural development is inhibited by a most unsatisfactory system of land tenure.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary education on any large scale in Iraq is of recent growth. It began with the traditional Arabic mullah school, in which small groups of boys under the direction of a religious teacher memorized religious lore in a monotonous and repetitive manner. Traces of this verbal technique are still obvious in many of the primary schools.

Under the Ottoman régime the nucleus of a schools system was introduced, and it is said that by 1913 there were some 6,000 children attending primary schools of a sort. Soon after the next military conquest the British promoted some further educational development and, in particular, substituted Arabic instead of the alien Turkish language as the medium of instruction. By 1921 there were reputed to be more than 15,000 children attending public primary schools.

It is significant, however, that no real approach to a system of public primary schooling was made until the nation took its educational affairs into its own hands. Since the meeting of the first Iraqi Parliament in 1925 a real impetus appears to have been given to the development of primary education. By 1931 there existed 316 public primary schools with an enrolment of some 35,000 pupils. By 1950 extraordinary quantitative progress had been made, for by that year 175,000 children were enrolled in over 1,000 public primary schools.

THE LAW AND ADMINISTRATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

By 1940 the development of primary education, and of higher education, had gone on at such a pace that it was necessary to